

The 2River View

22.2 (Winter 2018)



new poems by

Daniel Bourne, Clara Burghilea, Andrew Cox
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Wendy Noonan

Our Friendship

I'm walking in the woods alone. Moss pelts giant stalks of trees. Light is sparse here, the air cool and wet in my lungs. I turn a corner and there, in the path, lies the body of a rabbit: limp, white, and so immaterial, I think it's a pile of skin and fur. But when I turn the thing over with my foot, I see the teeth, long and yellow, the open eye fixed at the sky.

Because I have nowhere special to go, I build a fire by this rabbit. Take off my shoes, my hat. The sun will go down soon. The rabbit has crawled into my lap, its death so fresh the body is not yet filled with beetles. I close vacant, wild eyes; stroke fur that feels alive.

When its skin opens off the bone, it comes clean, like an unfurling tongue. I pull handfuls of guts and throw them in the bushes. Followed by the tiny liver. Lungs. But I'm careful with the thin blue skinned gall bladder; if it breaks open, the meat is ruined. I cook its skinny breast on a spit over the fire for my dinner and vow tomorrow I will make a pair of gloves from the silky fur in my pocket. Around me, the darkness is a vein, and I am its blood. I am sick with love.

Daniel Bourne

Garden Psalm

O those songs I only try to remember
When I have drunk too much
O those songs

That only manage
To rise up through my throat
Translucent species

Like a hummingbird's bib
Buzz song
That gets you in the flower

Daniel Bourne

A Warm Spell in Winter

(The last semester before my favorite classroom is demolished in the renovation of Kauke Hall, The College of Wooster, January 2005)

Here, by the window, open in January,
I look at the scarred arms of the oak trees. We would
all like to lie down and die on a day like this,
the sky so blue we have to look away, the calm
scratches of students hoping to dig up their lost
cities of words, the layers of clay and childhood,
a civilization that ended so quickly
there was no time to look back, no language created
for the last words that will always need to be said
afterwards; while I, a sheepish undertaker,
hoarse and subdued, point out the saddest trees are those
with leaves still hanging. Like dead men still not buried.

Clara Burghilea

Brook water

The stones unwashed, the sands unclenched
I place them around the heart,
an armor of grit over glassy wounds,
stringed under the ribs
of the river that is you, mother,
flowing into me, endlessly.

You are word-built,
yet I can seize
the whole of you into my mind.
I wish I could go back to you
and the way you poured into words.
You run like cold brook water over my heart.

Clara Burghilea

Prayer to My Mother

If I were to bury you anew
there would be no marked grave,
no painted cross or hired mourners.
For all the fresh gravel you were fed
a union of
wives, mothers, daughters
forgotten and erased,
would recite next to you.
Stagnant water would flood,
barren women would bear,
soft rains would heal,
men would return.
In my dreams, you plunge at me
through the night
laughing your laughter
as only the dead can surprise us.
If I were to have you again,
I'd cradle that sound,
I'd write you in poems,
soft-skinned, ripe.
If I were to bury you anew,
I'd lie next to you,
crafted words needless
beauty and grief ours.

Andrew Cox

Hot Springs Said Call Me When You Come Up for Air

The boy splashed into bed and sank as Hot Springs offered no backstory as it turned the mattress into one of its black lakes

The water embraced the sheets and led them in a dance that parents will never know

The water flowed in and out of the boy's ears bringing with it his father's voice and his mother's lullabies

His lungs and his hair let the water know they were not enemies and could keep a secret

Hot Springs relished in being an unreliable narrator reluctant to explain why the water came in the form of a boy's mattress

The Chicago Seven did not know the boy would be taught by the water to understand the power of voice overs and how the camera was groping history in its lens

Hot Springs chose a leap year to introduce the boy to water as the Battle of Khe Sanh would add itself to the future's evening news and his mother became a wingless bird who could fly

Hot Springs refused to provide details why it had to be the water that made the boy's blue eyes beacons in a lake's bottom or why his father grew smaller in the eyes of the sky

The water let the boy swim with joy while Martin Luther King's assassination seeped under every front door in America

Hot Springs knew it was pure genius to choose water and its ability to be interpreted by no one the boy could swim to and ask for help

Ho Chi Minh would never know the boy was rising upwards to his mother's lap where he would lay his head and understand the water came to teach him about night sweats and the depths he had travelled so far

Andrew Cox

In Hot Springs Bipolar Brings with it Bad Weather

Big sky said let's knock the birds from the trees
And when I opened the door
I remembered the time
We were in the car with our mother

And the rain said let's make these wipers
Work hard for a living
And the backseat said these three kids
Will know nothing of the tornado

There in the distance
Where it skips across the tabletop land
And gathers roofs for its collection
And the deer in the middle of the road

Stares at the headlights and says
Bipolar brings with it bad weather
And Hot Springs said I will not be what you hoped for
There are always others

Big sky said I am too busy to hear all these voices
And the mother is too busy
Gripping the wheel of a car in a storm
And the three kids are too busy in the backseat

To understand about the deer
Or why Hot Springs cares nothing about
Neurotransmitters or why a stranger
Will pull a trigger when I open the door

Elizabeth Forsythe

If I Petal-Pluck a Daisy It Becomes an Augury

if i petal-pluck a daisy it becomes an augury
this morning a small tawny bird hovered shoulder height & whispered
something about the future i only caught when it said venus &
proclaimed the body of woman is divine i asked what about the brain

she was next to me she is always next to me forehead pressed into my neck
She fingerspells trauma against my skin the bird said nothing & went up in flame
it wasn't a phoenix so the ash meant nothing
the fire meant nothing
later i swallow a razor because she told me to

Elizabeth Forsythe

I try telling John I don't believe in ghosts

i try telling John i don't believe in ghosts

[this is a lie]

it spills from my lips &

i wind it around my fingers a silver chain & black crystal

a rosary i choke on i don't know the words

& ask instead about burial

he places his fingers to my mouth rock salt & running water

he's here because i asked him to be

kept at the edges

bone ash against my chest

i read about funerary cannibalism & think i can understand

to keep the dead this close

so much closer

i have a sudden want for gentleness

Laura E. Hoffman

Redacted Sister Heaven

when the epileptic
silhouettes
dance behind
veils of butter-
white softness
in the high rise
windows of
the Holiday Inn
downtown

I imagine that
the shadow
of my baby sister
moves among them

I look up
from my life
on the dying
highway below

and in my head
she's still wearing
a pink one-piece
with gold stars
stretched over
her little heart

if I could
I'd wish her love
from the bottom

of my imperfect parts

Laura E. Hoffman

Sandman

mounds of gold
from a thousand
eyeballs
rolling like
saltwater tides

tumultuous
as oysters
pinching, pulling
suckling pearls

I want to find
the gritty sleep
of his corners
and the tears
of other women
spilled over rows
of bad bones
bleaching

but
in my bed
of wet sand

he has come
for me

J. C. Hopkins

Have You Ever Seen

a bird
frozen to a branch
i have
i was twelve
coming home from school
on a frigid afternoon

it's true
not only that
there was two of them

J. C. Hopkins

The Sun Comes Up Quickly Now

the song, a garbled bag of birds
the trees outside my window are golden
today, i will drive the electrolux all over this place;
taking up the extradited crumbs of children
left in their hunger and haste

in this emptiness i imagine
what could be present
what could be devised
what could be devastated
out of paint and string and palette
as if crave was a word that could be used
for this purpose, then i crave,
if not a person, then a puppy

Brock Jones

Bent

A fleeting aversion to our foolish angles
day again resolves around the cruelest angles.

This heart is tall grass wind-sheared
at the nodes bent over ruthless angles
sounding a calligraphy we might comprehend
but for the ability never to speak our truest angles.

Not hating the beautiful war then finds us
cracking now our skulls on newest angles.

Rain-black clouds open orchid-like spooling
out their contrast of bluest angles.

Who wants to live forever as we are now
traced, Brock, by only our most brutish angles?

Brock Jones

Dream in Which the City's Destroyed

Our city's turning to dust. Witness the collapses from an upper window: our city destroyed by fire. This city. Ours. Not fire in the elemental sense, but as firefight. As in, combat. As in, war. Firepower like we've never seen in 15 years of fighting. Like I've never. Endless stream of tracers cuts buildings at the knees and they crumble. All of them. A coming rumble. To dust. It's clear it's coming for us. No one speaks. No time to know. No time to say. A rumble this bodily can't be. Firepower like this can't be. This crumble. This disintegration. We fall, we debris. I now alone in my falling. This rubble of falling. I cover my head: effortless the passing. This return to dust.

Kevin McLellan

Anesthesia

A woman told me that her mother, while under the heart surgery knife, came to, heard the male doctors making fun of her elderly body.

C. was afraid she wouldn't wake, asked the boy what it was like. He said, *It's like you die.*

After, in a violet haze, I felt the phantom probe for days that followed—it just laid there.

Kevin McLellan

Devices and Misogyny

A woman pounds the dough

with a rolling pin
in the back. She knows

how because she was once

dough. In the front
of the house another

woman, a customer, asks

a man waiting for a stool
at the counter if he's waiting

for a stool. He orders eggs,

ignores her—and she looks
for another place to sit.

Martin Ott

For Every Nail in the Bomb There Was an Act of Kindness

For every song rising above the gathered crowd
there was an edict of night.
For every house missing a door
there was a stranger who held the villains at bay.
For every banned book hidden from the rabble
there was a pyre extinguished by voices.
For every drone zipping toward its foe
there was a message left for a loved one.
For every outburst of anger billowing to rend
there was a congregation holding on.

Martin Ott

Pesky Woodpecker Breaks Car Mirrors in Georgia Neighborhood

We suspected this attack was premeditated, the advanced scout of a bird revolution making sure that we could not track the billowing clouds hiding the feathery apocalypse. It turns out that the crime was not so easy to pigeonhole. The bird mental health system had been failing for years, with early release for woodpeckers who jabbed mailboxes and baseball bats. The tiny holes puncturing the night sky were due to the same bird, a messenger of angels signaling rapture in Morse code and the devil captured in glass shards. The outbreak would not end until we decided upon a motive that would explain our inability to phase our lovemaking to the crackle of glass. We would not catch this troublemaker in refracted light or in the margins of our children's books. We shake with the wind and misjudge the shelter of trees.

Stella Vinitchi Radulescu

blues (1)

an angel lost its wings
by telling the truth
female or male
couldn't fly
or walk
on layers of light
which wasn't
light
nor darkness soul after soul
begging to let them in
I walk on snow like
on lost dreams

Stella Vinitchi Radulescu

blues (2)

music from the bones : sleep
my heart dream
as if already dead you're looking
for seasons looking
for spring
water dripping from closed
eyes
hands shivering the branches
the tree
a solitary thought pushes
the sky beyond
any words here
& there
music from the stones

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Contributors

Daniel Bourne teaches in English and Environmental Studies at The College of Wooster in Ohio, where he edits *Artful Dodge*. His books of poetry include *The Household Gods*; *Where No One Spoke the Language*; and *On the Crossroads of Asia and Europe*, translations of Polish political poet Tomasz Jastrun.

Clara Burghelea is Editor at Large of *Village of Crickets*. Her poems are published in journals such as *Ambit Magazine*, *Full Crow Press*, *Indiana Voice Journal*, *Peacock Journal*, and *Quail Bell Magazine*.

Andrew Cox is the author of *The Equation that Explains Everything*, *Fortune Cookies*, and the hypertext chapbook *Company X*. He edits *The UCity Review*.

Elizabeth Forsythe, who teaches at the University of Tampa, is the recipient of the 2016 Jane Lumley Prize. Her work can be found at *Blood Orange Review*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Hermeneutic Chaos*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, and elsewhere.



Laura Hoffman is a United States Marine Corps veteran and a senior at The University of North Florida. Her most recent work appears in *The Bangalore Review*, *Cease Cows*, *Clear Poetry*, *The Gyroscope Review*, *Poetry Circle*, and *Typishly*.

JC Hopkins is a Grammy nominated songwriter, a poet, painter, and jazz pianist. He has had two books of poetry published: *From Far Rockaway to Windsor Terrace* and *Summer of Blue Humidity*. He also is the managing editor of *Noir Nation* and the poetry journal *Love Within Love*.

Brock Jones is the author of *Cenotaph* (University of Arkansas Press, 2016). His poems have appeared in *The Iowa Review*, *Lunch Ticket*, *Ninth Letter*, *Poetry Daily*, and elsewhere. He is an assistant professor of English at Utah Valley University.

Kevin McLellan is the author of *Ornitheology* (The Word Works, forthcoming 2018), *Hemispheres* (Fact-Simile Editions, forthcoming 2018), *[box]* (Letter [r] Press, 2016), *Tributary* (Barrow Street, 2015), and *Round Trip* (Seven Kitchens, 2010).

Wendy Noonan tutors writing at a small, private art college in Portland, Oregon. Her poetry has been featured most recently in *Crazy Horse*, *Muzzle Magazine*, and *Painted Bride Quartely*.

Martin Ott is the author of seven books of poetry and fiction, including *Underdays* (University of Notre Dame Press) and *Spectrum* (C&R Press). His recent work has appeared *The North American Review* and *Prairie Schooner*.

Stella Vinitchi Radulescu writes poetry in English, French and Romanian, and her poems have appeared in *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Louisville Review*, *Rhino*, *Seneca Review*, and *Wallace Stevens Journal*, among others. In 2015, Orison Books Press published *I Scrape the Window of Nothingness: New and Selected Poems*.

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About 2River

Since 1996, 2River has been a site of poetry and art, quarterly publishing *The 2River View* and occasionally publishing individual authors in the 2River Chapbook Series. 2River is also the home of Muddy Bank, the 2River blog.

Richard Long
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